

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Transit and Rail
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TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Mark Imhoff, Director, Division of Transit & Rail

DATE: September 28, 2012

RE: SB 37/Prioritization of Railroad Corridors for Preservation Report

Recommendation It is recommended that the Transportation Commission approve the resolution directing Executive Director to submit to the attached SB 37/Prioritization of Railroad Corridors for Preservation Report to the TRLC.

Background Every year the Executive Director is required to submit a report to the Transportation Legislative Review Committee (TLRC) giving a status on potential railroad abandonments, potential rail lines for acquisition, and State Rail Bank Fund Activities; this is the 15th reporting year.

Since there is consistently very little to report on railroad abandonments, in the past and in this year's report, we have elected to include a second section briefly describing and outlining New Initiatives and Activities; including, the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, Denver Union Station, the Interregional Connectivity Study, the AGS Feasibility Study, and Amtrak activities in Colorado. Two priorities are identified in the 2012 SB 27 Report: 1) monitor the status of the Tennessee Pass line, and 2) monitor the status of the Fort Collins Branch.

The SB 37 Report requirements were established in the timeframe of the state/CDOT acquiring the Towner Line, which has now been sold in full to the V&S Railway. The state has had no activities related to railroad abandonment or acquisition since. In addition, our first State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan has been completed and approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The Plan documents and outlines the process for identifying and tracking railroad abandonments, and in our view could replace the need for annual reporting to the TLRC. To this end, during the 2012 legislative session the TLRC sponsored a bill to eliminate a few CDOT reporting requirements, including the SB 37 Report; however, the bill died in committee.